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ABSTRACT

Since 1987 schools in Baltimore (Maryland) have been working with the Fund for Educational Excellence and the education research center at Johns Hopkins University to develop comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships. To understand better how these schools are building and improving their partnership programs, administrators, teachers, and parents serving on Action Teams for School-Family-Community Partnerships at 6 of 15 replication schools in Baltimore were interviewed. This report focuses on how these Action Teams used the types of involvement in J. Epstein's framework to develop more effective school-family-community partnerships. The original five types of involvement--parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision making--were supplemented by a sixth form of involvement, collaborating with community. Profiles of five elementary schools and one middle school show the Action Teams at work. Study data resulted in the development of the insights about school, family, and community partnerships. Successful partnerships: (1) are a shared responsibility; (2) take time to establish; (3) reach out to all family members; (4) improve in incremental steps and with planning; (5) are important throughout the grades; (6) cannot be effective without a focus on students; (7) include the community; (8) help schools reach the "hard-to-reach"; (9) link to the curriculum and student learning; and (10) meet the challenges of all six types of involvement. An appendix presents the interview protocol. (Contains four references.) (SLD)

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ED 408 403

CRESPAR

BUILDING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL – FAMILY – COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mavis G. Sanders

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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BUILDING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Report No. 13

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The Center

Every child has the capacity to succeed in school and in life. Yet far too many children, especially those from poor and minority families, are placed at risk by school practices that are based on a sorting paradigm in which some students receive high-expectations instruction while the rest are relegated to lower quality education and lower quality futures. The sorting perspective must be replaced by a "talent development" model that asserts that all children are capable of succeeding in a rich and demanding curriculum with appropriate assistance and support.

The mission of the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR) is to conduct the research, development, evaluation, and dissemination needed to transform schooling for students placed at risk. The work of the Center is guided by three central themes — ensuring the success of all students at key development points, building on students' personal and cultural assets, and scaling up effective programs — and conducted through seven research and development programs and a program of institutional activities.

CRESPAR is organized as a partnership of Johns Hopkins University and Howard University, in collaboration with researchers at the University of California at Santa Barbara, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Chicago, Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation, WestEd Regional Laboratory, University of Memphis, and University of Houston-Clear Lake.

CRESPAR is supported by the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students (At-Risk Institute), one of five institutes created by the Educational Research, Development, Dissemination and Improvement Act of 1994 and located within the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) at the U.S. Department of Education. The At-Risk Institute supports a range of research and development activities designed to improve the education of students at risk of educational failure because of limited English proficiency, poverty, race, geographic location, or economic disadvantage.

Abstract

Since 1987, schools in Baltimore have been working with the Fund for Educational Excellence and the education research center at Johns Hopkins University to develop comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships. To better understand how these schools are building and improving their partnership programs, administrators, teachers and parents serving on Action Teams for School-Family-Community Partnerships at six schools were interviewed. This report focuses on how Action Teams for School-Family-Community Partnerships in the schools that were visited use Epstein's framework of six types of involvement to develop more effective school-family-community connections.

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Introduction

In 1987, the Fund for Educational Excellence and the education research center at Johns Hopkins University began a pilot project to work with eight elementary and middle schools in the Baltimore City Public School District to identify, implement, and evaluate successful practices of school-family-community partnerships. Using Epstein's framework of five types of family and community involvement — parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision making — the pilot project helped these schools build partnerships with families and communities to improve the school environment and support student learning. Data generated from the pilot project and from studies being conducted nationally allowed Joyce Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University to broaden and refine their understanding of the processes, challenges, and results of well designed and implemented school-family-community partnerships.

Two important developments occurred as a result of the pilot project in Baltimore and work in other cities and states in the nation. First, the framework of five types of involvement was expanded to six types. The sixth type of involvement — collaborating with community — was separated from the other five types to focus attention on the unique aspects and challenges of developing partnerships with community members and agencies. However, schools were still encouraged to use community collaborations to develop and implement practices under the other five types of family involvement.

Second, Epstein developed the action team approach for school, family, and community partnerships to ensure that school, family, and community representatives shared responsibility for the development, implementation, and evaluation of partnership practices (Epstein & Hollifield, 1996). Action Teams for School-Family-Community Partnerships consist of six to twelve members including family members, teachers, administrators, other school staff (i.e., counselors, nurses, parent liaisons), community representatives, and students in the upper grades, selected to serve two-year, renewable terms. To organize its work, the Action Team selects a chair or co-chairs to coordinate and schedule meetings and to share information with the rest of the school community about partnership activities. Subcommittee chairs or co-chairs oversee work and progress on each of the six types of involvement, and ensure that at least one practice under each type of involvement is implemented or improved each year.

In 1992, the action team approach for school-family-community partnerships and the framework of six types of involvement was tested in fifteen replication schools in Baltimore. With training and support from a full-time district level facilitator, Action Teams from the fifteen schools were able to develop programs of school-family-community partnerships that increased

the involvement of inner-city families and enhanced students' learning and school success. The training and support consisted of a two-day training workshop for school Action Teams, ongoing assistance and support from the facilitator, and an annual conference to share, evaluate, and plan for the following year.

In 1994, based on the knowledge gained from the replication schools, twenty-four elementary and middle schools in the southern area of the Baltimore Public School District became part of what is now called *Baltimore's School-Family-Community Partnership Program.* One year later, twenty-five elementary and middle schools in the northwest area of the city's public school district joined the Program. Full-time area facilitators for School-Family-Community Partnerships, with the aid of area superintendents, guide, assist, and support the school Action Teams. The area facilitators are teachers on leave of absence from the school system who are eager to help other educators, families, and community members improve their interactions to enhance students' learning.

To better understand how the forty-nine schools in Baltimore's program are building and improving their partnerships, administrators, teachers, and parents serving on Action Teams for School-Family-Community Partnerships at six schools were interviewed. This report focuses on how Action Teams for School-Family-Community Partnerships in the schools that were visited use Epstein's framework of six types of involvement (Epstein, 1995; Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, & Simon, 1996) to develop more effective school-family-community connections.

Methods

In January 1996, the area facilitators for School-Family-Community Partnerships from the southern and northwest areas of the Baltimore City Public School District were asked to identify schools in which well functioning Action Teams were conducting partnership activities under the six types of involvement. From the list of fifteen schools generated, six schools — Curtis Bay Elementary School, Maree G. Farring Elementary School, Benjamin Franklin Middle School, James Mosher Elementary School, Langston Hughes Elementary School, and Cross Country Elementary School — were selected for case studies. These six schools, three from each area, were selected to study how schools with differing populations and resources take steps to build strong partnerships that meet the needs and interests of their families, students, and communities.

Before the schools were visited, the author of this study met with the area facilitators to discuss and review the school-family-community partnership activities being implemented at each school. Based on the information gathered, an interview protocol was developed (see

Appendix). The interview questions were designed to gather information on some of the "best practices" being implemented by schools in the Baltimore School-Family-Community Partnership Program, how these schools are meeting some of the challenges that accompany each of the six types of involvement, and how these schools are measuring their success.

Schools were visited over a two-month period beginning in February 1996. The school visits were prearranged. Initial contact with the school principals and Action Team chairpersons were made by the area facilitators, who also scheduled the dates and times for the visits.

At each school visit, interviews were conducted, supporting documents were reviewed, and, when possible, school observations were made. The interviews were face-to-face, conducted by the author, and lasted from one to three hours. At each school, the chair of the Action Team was interviewed. In all but one case, the chairperson was a teacher at the school. In addition, the principal or a parent member of the Action Team was also interviewed. The interview protocol guided the interviews, but respondents were encouraged to elaborate in order to provide more accurate and comprehensive descriptions of the goals, activities, challenges, and outcomes of their programs of school-family-community partnerships. These interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the respondents, transcribed, and analyzed for emergent themes. The crafted narratives are presented below.

School Narratives

The schools featured in this article attribute much of their success in developing stronger connections with their families and communities to the work of their Action Teams, the framework of six types of involvement, and the assistance of full-time facilitators who visit and support each school's Action Team. According to the schools, the action team structure ensures that work on each of the six types of involvement is distributed among many people, which greatly reduces each individual's workload and the possibility of burnout. Although none of the schools started at ground zero in their practices of school-family-community partnership, they credit the framework of six types of involvement with helping them to organize, systematize, and expand their efforts. These schools have found that a well-functioning Action Team and a comprehensive framework of involvement are crucial elements for building and institutionalizing effective school-family-community partnership programs.

Curtis Bay Elementary School

The School. Curtis Bay Elementary School is located in a predominantly white, heavily industrialized area of Baltimore City. It serves approximately 390 students in grades pre-kindergarten through five. Over 90% of the students are white, non-Hispanic. In 1995, about 62% of these students received free or reduced-priced lunches, and about 12% received special education services. The school has a relatively high mobility rate with approximately 13% entering the school and 26% leaving the school during the 1994-95 school year. Interviews were conducted with the principal, who is a member of the Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships, and a kindergarten teacher, who is chair of the Action Team.

The Story. Curtis Bay has been a part of Baltimore's School-Family-Community Partnership Program for four years — the first two years as one of fifteen replication schools and the last two years with twenty-three other schools in the southern area of the Baltimore City School District. Although the principal came to the school after the partnership program had been in place for a year, neither she nor the chair of the Action Team report that the change in administrators affected the progress of the program. The principal explains:

> The goals are the same. Everybody is focused and the focus is to get parents and the community more involved. You may change administrators all you want, but as long as the goal and Action Team remain, nothing really changes — progress continues.

As part of the Baltimore School-Family-Community Partnership Program, Curtis Bay's Action Team writes a One-Year Action Plan each year to indicate how its members will work with teachers, parents, students, and the community to improve or maintain practices for each of the six types of involvement: 1) parenting, 2) communicating, 3) volunteering, 4) learning at home, 5) decision-making, and 6) collaborating with the community. The school has partnerships with several area businesses and community agencies, but its partnership with SCM Chemicals provides the most comprehensive example of Type 6 involvement (collaborating with the community). One initiative that has developed from this partnership is a recycling program. Three out of four years the school has placed first in state recycling competitions. Through its recycling efforts, Curtis Bay Elementary School has been able to raise funds for other partnership efforts and school needs. SCM also provides rewards (e.g. pizza parties and trips to Hershey Park and the Discovery Zone) to twenty of the school's top recyclers.

Some SCM Chemicals employees volunteer as tutors and mentors to help selected students. These students are selected based on their need for academic enrichment or their need for a caring adult to take time with them and make them feel special. The school tries to make

sure that tutors and mentors are available for every student in need. Parental response to the tutoring program has been very positive.

SCM Chemicals also sponsors a READ, WRITE, READ Program. Children participating in this program write an employee at SCM about themselves and the kinds of books that they like to read. The letters are delivered to employees who buy books for and then write back to the students. When students receive the books, they write thank you letters.

In addition, SCM sponsors the school's summer garden project. Participating students and teachers weed and maintain several plots (independent student plots and a large school plot) of vegetables and fruit twice a week from 9 am to 12 noon during the summer. Some SCM employees provide lunch for the children, and other employees help to maintain the gardens. Children from grades K through five participate in the garden project, which has been very successful. Curtis Bay took first place in the Maryland State fair last year for a watermelon it entered in competition. The project is open to the entire community, and fruits and vegetables are given to those who participate.

SCM supports other activities at the school. The company sponsors the Curtis Bay Boy Scout troop and the school's annual science fair. For the science fair, SCM employees consult with students, helping them to think about and approach problems scientifically. Representatives from SCM acknowledge all students who participate in the science fair during an awards program attended by families and community members.

SCM has also sponsored a video team for the last two years, allowing some Curtis Bay students to acquire first-hand knowledge of video equipment by working with it at the SCM office. Students in the video club interview employees at SCM about their jobs and the required education and training, then they edit the video tapes and show them at the school.

To help with the goal of attendance, SCM rewards students with good attendance and their families with special trips to Hershey Park in nearby eastern Pennsylvania. Curtis Bay's principal believes that this effort benefits students and their families, many of whom would not otherwise have an opportunity to travel outside their communities.

Curtis Bay's partnership with SCM has developed over time and continues to grow. For example, Curtis Bay and SCM are currently planning a DOTS FOR TOTS program to show young children how to place dots on and dial the numbers 9-1-1 in case of emergencies.

When asked if *all* students at Curtis Bay benefit from the school's partnership with SCM, the principal and chair of the Action Team responded with an emphatic and simultaneous "Yes!" Because SCM assists the school with such a variety of activities at each grade level and because

an SCM employee is always at the school in some capacity, the company has significant connections with all students and their families. The influence of some of the employees is so great that the children call them "Dad."

The chair of the Action Team and the principal are quick to note that parents are central to the success of the programs sponsored by SCM. Parents volunteer for the gardening project, the recycling project, and the tutoring program. According to the principal, "Parents are truly, truly supportive of SCM. They understand and recognize that there is a partnership here and it is not just limited to the school, this partnership is reaching out to the community."

Reaching out is a central theme at Curtis Bay. The school especially reaches out to its "hard to reach" families. At Curtis Bay, the hard to reach families are those who live in a neighborhood that is some distance from the school. Students living in this neighborhood are bussed to school, and it is often difficult for their parents to volunteer at the school or attend school functions. Curtis Bay involves these parents by making sure that they have opportunities to become involved in ways that don't require their coming to the school. For example, the school has a homework hotline. Parents can volunteer to be "Homework Parents." Homework Parents provide their telephone numbers to other parents who have children at the same grade level so that if or when they are unsure of the homework, they can call someone to find out the assignment. The Homework Parents' numbers are published in the school's newsletter. By providing at-home volunteering opportunities, Curtis Bay is meeting one of the challenges of Type 3 involvement — providing volunteer opportunities to *all* families, not just those that can come to the school (Epstein, 1995).

Curtis Bay also involves parents through their use of TIPS interactive homework. At least once a month, each teacher assigns homework designed to involve parents in their children's learning. TIPS homework is designed to promote greater interaction between families and children around schoolwork, but does not require that the family *teach* the child a particular subject. Instead, it enables families to better support, listen to, react to, praise, guide, monitor, and discuss the work that their children bring home (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, & Simon, 1996). All TIPS homework assignments include a section that asks families to comment on their children's work. The chair of the Action Team recounts one experience that shows the potential benefits of TIPS homework and other practices that encourage family involvement in students' learning. She states:

> One of the parents in my kindergarten class came in and said to me 'Do you know that I went in and took my GED and passed it! Do you know when I was in school my worst subject was social studies. I just could not do social studies. Well, I have been working with my son on his social studies homework — about the Pilgrims, about Columbus, the

> continents. Do you know that I got my best grade in social studies because I remembered what he has been learning in school!

Evaluation of their school-family-community partnership practices is somewhat problematic at Curtis Bay. For example, sign-in sheets are a common way for schools to evaluate the number of parents who come into the school, the times that they come in, and the work that they do. However, because parent involvement has become so much a part of Curtis Bay's school program, many parents do not feel as if they need to sign in — they feel like "members of the faculty." But evaluations do take place at the school. The principal explains that the school is constantly evaluating and modifying its partnership activities. The Action Team is aware of increases or decreases in participation in clubs and group activities (student attendance is recorded) and in family and community volunteers. This occurs less by analyzing sign-in sheets and attendance records, but more through looking and listening to what is going on at the school. Evaluation, albeit informal, is central to the success and maintenance of Curtis Bay's program of school, family, and community partnerships.

Curtis Bay's principal credits much of the school's success in involving families, both at and away from the school site, to clear, open communication. The school has a monthly newsletter with a response form. The newsletter contains information from each class, a calendar for the month, workshop summaries, community events and other important information. Families are thus informed about school and community activities, and have the opportunity to comment on these activities, to ask questions, or to make suggestions.

"Word of mouth" is also an important means of communication. According to the principal, "Parents start talking, they say to one, 'You know, it's really different up there. I like it up there; they welcome us. Why don't you come up?' That's your best way of getting parents to come to the school." How does Curtis Bay welcome its parents? One way is its parents' room, a comfortable space where family members can find parenting information, carry out volunteer work, meet with teachers and other school staff, and conduct other partnership activities.

At the beginning of each school year, the Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships at Curtis Bay Elementary School communicates to families about the school's needs at a volunteer workshop. At this workshop, the Action Team explains to parents all the things that they can do to help the school. Parents also complete a survey about themselves, their interests, and whether they would prefer to volunteer at the school or at home. This survey is also included in the first school newsletter, so that parents who cannot attend the workshop are included in this effort. The Action Team subcommittee for Type 3 activities compiles the information and makes a list of parents' names, phone numbers, interests, and availability, and gives a list to each teacher and keeps one copy in the main office for general use. Even if parents

aren't on the volunteer list, they are welcomed at the school and provided with something to do. As the principal notes, "We never turn a parent away." Many of the parents who started as volunteers are now paid employees at the school.

With the Action Team structure, the work of involving families and communities in children's education is distributed among many teachers, parents, administrators, and community members, greatly reducing the workload of any one person. According to the chair of the Action Team, "We have been a part of the Baltimore School-Family-Community Partnership Program for four years, and Curtis Bay has gradually developed its partnership program. I don't think that teachers realize how many things they are involved in now. Almost every teacher is involved in some after-school club or activity."

Curtis Bay has benefitted from their partnerships efforts. Attendance has improved in no small part because students want to come to school and participate in all the available activities at the school. The principal notes:

> It's the children who seem to determine how much participation the parents will have. So, if you can make things exciting for the children, they will pressure the parents. I will never forget the parent who came up to me and said, "I am going to have to make it up to the building more because my daughter sees that there is a parent in the cafeteria here. And my daughter asks why can't I come... and I'm going to try to come up here more." They put pressure on their parents to do more. The key to all of this is the students. You've got to reach the students and the students will reach the parents for you.

Maree G. Farring Elementary School

The School. Maree G. Farring Elementary School is located in a predominantly white, heavily industrialized area of Baltimore City. It serves approximately 500 students in grades pre-kindergarten through five. More than 90% of the students are white, non-Hispanic. In 1995, about 58% of these students received free or reduced-price lunches, and about 15% received special education services. The school has a relatively high mobility rate with approximately 12% entering the school and 24% leaving the school during the 1994-95 school year. Interviews were conducted with the chairperson of the Action Team and one of its parent members.

The Story. Farring Elementary School has been a part of Baltimore's School-Family-Community Partnership Program for two years. The school entered the program in 1994 with other elementary and middle schools in the southern area of the Baltimore City School District.

Information on school workshops as well as other school events and activities is summarized in the school's monthly newsletter for families. These summaries keep families who cannot attend school meetings informed about school-related activities and events. Prior to joining the Partnership program, Farring's newsletter was the sole responsibility of one teacher. Since joining the Partnership program, the Action Team's communication subcommittee, which includes three teachers, is responsible for producing the newsletter. The newsletter was named by the students and students are selected to help with its production each month.

Farring's Action Team for School, Family, Community Partnerships has devoted much time and effort to increasing the number of family volunteers at the school — Type 3 Involvement. The goal is for more families to become familiar with the school's daily operation and curriculum. The Action Team hopes that as volunteering families learn more about the school, they will share their knowledge and understanding with other families who are unable to visit the school. Farring Elementary School has little extra space but wanted to ensure that families who volunteer or visit the school have a parent room for their comfort and convenience. The school provides a "parent room" in a modest corner in the cafeteria replete with a coffeepot and cups. Because their parents are so active in the classrooms (there is at least one parent in every room), the modest space is adequate for visiting parents to share information and ideas. When parents visit the school for the first time, they are always greeted warmly by other parents or by the Action Team chairperson, offered a cup of coffee in the "parent room," and encouraged to get involved.

While working on Type 3 Involvement, the Action Team has met key challenges for good implementation (Epstein, 1995). One challenge of Type 3 Involvement is to provide all families

with opportunities to assist the school, not just those families who can come to the school building. Farring has made certain that it provides parents who are employed or have other obligations during the school day with opportunities to become "at home" volunteers. For example, one parent makes school buttons during her free time. Other parents buy needed supplies and leave them at the school for teachers.

Students at Farring Elementary School play a crucial role in getting parents to volunteer at and for the school. They influence parents in a way that the school cannot. According to the chair of the Action Team, "If you see somebody's parent working with your class, you go home — especially if your parent is not volunteering at or for the school and say, 'Ma, help us out.' So the children have played an important role in that way."

Farring Elementary School has seen a marked increase in its number of volunteers, those who help at the school as well as away from the school. The Action Team has been able to document this increase through sign-in sheets. Volunteers sign their names and the times that they arrive and leave. This allows Farring's Action Team to keep a record of volunteer hours. Although the chair of the Action Team acknowledges that parents may forget to sign in and out on occasion, sign-in sheets help to keep track of the program's progress. Sign-in sheets also allow the Action Team at Farring Elementary School to recognize and celebrate its volunteers. Such recognition occurs twice yearly, in December and in May.

Increased volunteerism has yielded benefits for faculty, students, and families at Maree G. Farring Elementary School. A number of parents who started volunteering at Farring have also enrolled in the GED program that the school offers, and a few have entered college — one is majoring in education. The parent member of the Action Team attributes these accomplishments to the increased self-confidence experienced by many of the parents who volunteer.

The increased volunteerism has also had a positive effect on school climate. Communication between parents and teachers has improved. The parents understand more of what teachers experience and the teachers know that parents care and are willing to help them. The Action Team chairperson notes that only after becoming involved in the Partnership program has she become aware of how important parental participation is. She states, "Parents have to become a part of their child's education for that child to succeed."

For Type 4 Involvement, the Action Team subcommittees on parenting, volunteering, and home learning have combined their efforts to conduct workshops that assist families in helping their children with reading and math at home. Organizers of the workshops give families survival kits that contain rulers, crayons, scissors, and tape. They also introduce families to TIPS

(Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork), an interactive homework process that Farring has adopted to increase families' involvement in their children's schoolwork (Epstein & Salinas, 1995).

Farring also has a number of collaborations with the community — Type 6 Involvement — of which it is proud. The school has a partnership with the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, who sponsors Farring's summer school program. It has a partnership with VISTA, whose members teach MSPAP skills at the school weekly. In addition, it has a partnership with the U.S. Army. Once a week, volunteers from the Army come to Farring and conduct physical fitness classes. This is important because the school does not currently have a physical education teacher. Maree G. Farring Elementary School is also working closely with a social worker in the community to renovate the school playground — once the equipment is bought, families will provide the labor needed to complete the project.

As this narrative clearly illustrates, the Action Team has been essential to the success of Farring's School-Family-Community Partnership program. According to the chairperson of the Action Team:

> You have to have an Action Team chair and a subcommittee chairperson for each type. As chair, my role is to delegate.... So we try to share this responsibility. I tell them, "This is a team and as a team, if one person on the team fails then all of us fail and I want this team to work and work together." I don't say I, I, I, no, it's we, we, we. We help each other. We have to. It's a lot of responsibility and you definitely need the team to pull it off.

According to the chairperson and parent member of the Action Team, the whole school is a part of and has benefitted from participation in Baltimore's Partnership program. All teachers are a part of Action Team subcommittees working with the six types of involvement. The parent member of the Action Team notes that students' reactions have been positive as well, although no formal student assessment has been done. Farring's Action Team is planning a formal assessment of students' reactions and ideas to improve its volunteer efforts and other aspects of its partnerships with families and communities.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

The School. Benjamin Franklin Middle School serves about 460 students in grades six through eight. Approximately 60% of these students are white and about 40% are African American. In 1995, about 74% of the student population received free or reduced-priced lunches, and about 21% received special education services. The mobility rate is high with about 14% entering and 32% withdrawing from the school during the 1994-1995 school year. A special education teacher who serves as co-chair of the Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships and a volunteer parent were interviewed in the school's spacious Parent Room.

The Story. Benjamin Franklin Middle School is part of the southern area of the Baltimore City Public School District, and has been a member of Baltimore's Partnership program for two years. As a middle school, Benjamin Franklin faces challenges that elementary schools do not. However, the school's Action Team is optimistic that with time, persistence, and well designed and implemented practices of partnership these challenges can be overcome.

One of the school's successful practices of partnership is "Parents Night Out," designed to bring parents to the school on the evening that report cards are distributed. This year was the first time that Benjamin Franklin held "Parents Night Out." In previous years, PTA meetings were scheduled on the evenings that report cards were distributed. Usually five to ten parents would attend. This year, however, approximately two hundred parents came to the first quarter's Parent Night Out. What made the difference? According to the co-chair of the Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships:

> We did a media blitz — newsletters went out, flyers were sent home everyday for two weeks to remind families of the date and time, phone calls were made (each teacher has a phone in the classroom). When positive phone calls were made to families, the teachers would let them know that we were having Parents Night Out for report card pick-up and parent-teacher conferences.... What we told them is the only way that you will get your child's report card is for you to come and get it and that they could have conferences with the teachers. And they came out. We were shocked. It was 5:30 p.m. and only a trickle of parents, and teachers said, "Well, here we go again." But by the time we were finishing up at 7:00 p.m., they were still coming in. We didn't get out until after 8:00 p.m. because parents were still coming. And the teachers stayed because they said, "As long as they are coming in, we're staying."

The evening was an unparalleled success. Parents told teachers and Action Team members that they loved the event. Families were encouraged to get refreshments when they finished visiting teachers. When they came to the Parent Room for refreshments, members of the Action Team talked to them about events and activities that were taking place at Benjamin Franklin and what they could do to become more involved. The school kept a record of those

attending the Parent Night Out by having family members write their names, addresses, phone numbers, and their children's names and grade-levels on sign-in sheets. Parents also had to sign sheets in each of the classes that they visited. Benjamin Franklin is using this information to determine which families were reached and which families the school needs to reach in different ways in the future.

When parents who did not attend the Parents Night Out came to the school to collect report cards, they were asked to sign in. If they wanted parent-teacher conferences, arrangements were made immediately. The school is planning a second Parents Night Out, and the co-chair of the Action Team expects an even greater turn out. The Action Team at Benjamin Franklin decided to implement this event as a Type 2 (Communication) activity and is planning to continue it because it is important for parents to be able to understand and discuss report cards with their children and teachers.

Benjamin Franklin has found that the action team approach makes a difference. It was easier to plan and implement the Parents Night Out because the responsibility did not fall on one person. The school's Action Team is a part of the School Improvement Team (SIT) and this collaborative arrangement means that everyone in the school is focused on common goals and serves on committees organized to achieve these goals, including the goal of improved school-family-community connections. The school has also found that the framework of six types of involvement is a useful tool for organizing their activities.

At Benjamin Franklin Middle School, many parents did not complete high school and are "hard to reach" because of limited literacy skills. Meeting the Type 2 challenge of providing clear, understandable information to *all* families (Epstein, 1995), Benjamin Franklin makes its school-to-home correspondence as "reader friendly" as possible. The school's "hard to reach" families also include those in which parents are raising their children *and* their grandchildren, and do not feel that they have time for school involvement. Benjamin Franklin is presently designing ways to reach these families and promote greater school involvement at the school and in the home. These ideas will become part of the Action Team's One-Year Action Plan for the next school year.

Although its Type 2 activities have been successful, the Action Team at Benjamin Franklin Middle School is not satisfied with its current level of Type 3 Involvement (Volunteering). According to the chair of the Action Team, some families are hesitant to work with young adolescents and need guidance and support from the school to do so. This statement was supported by one parent who began to volunteer at the school after his son received a poor grade in a class. He came to the school to observe and to discuss the grade with his son's teacher.

He was disturbed by what he describes as "a revelation about the lack of discipline among a few kids in every classroom... and the chaos that the snowball effect can produce." Because he now runs his own business, he has more free hours in the daytime and has become more involved at the school, hoping to assist with discipline. He states:

> A lot of these children are creating chaos because they don't really have an opportunity to focus on what they really like to do. As a volunteer here, I would like to start an after school computer program. I know that my own son doesn't like a lot of his academic courses, but I bought some software this summer and I saw his English grade go from a 'D' average to the low 90s. If we could get them interested in something like that I think it would be good for them.

This parent is working with the Action Team's subcommittee on volunteering to develop a more comprehensive volunteer program at the school. He enjoys "interfacing" with the students and believes that other reticent parents would also gain a great deal from volunteering at the school. Both he and the chair of the Action Team are optimistic that with more meaningful volunteer opportunities and volunteer training, Type 3 involvement at the school will improve.

The Action Team at Benjamin Franklin has found that training for school volunteers is essential. According to the co-chair of the Action Team:

> In the past, parent volunteers were required to go through one week's training during the summer on what to do when a child curses at you or calls you a name, what to do when you go into a classroom, and how to dress.

This type of training yielded better results than their current volunteer workshop. One parent from the summer training session is now a paid employee at the school and another co-chairs the Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships. Benjamin Franklin plans to return to more extensive volunteer training to avoid unnecessary school-family-student conflict.

As at other middle schools nationwide (Rutherford, 1995), building partnerships at Benjamin Franklin Middle School is not easy. The school is fighting apathy on many fronts. It is battling a community history of high student dropout rates. It is battling poverty and drug sales as an increasingly popular way to make money. It is battling community misperceptions about the school and school misperceptions about the community. Benjamin Franklin continues to work on improving partnerships, however, because as the co-chair of the Action Team states, "To battle these problems, the school, the families, and the community groups must work together."

James Mosher Elementary School

The School. James Mosher Elementary School serves about 450 students in grades pre-kindergarten through five. About 99% of these students are African American. In 1995, about 78% of the students received free or reduced-price lunches and about 10% received special education services. The mobility rate is lower than that in most Baltimore City elementary schools with about 9% entering and about 15% withdrawing from James Mosher Elementary School during the 1994-95 school year. Interviews were conducted with the co-chairs of the Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships. Both co-chairs are employed by the school as parent liaisons. The interviews were conducted in the school's bright, cheerful, and very active Parent Room.

The Story. As part of the northwest area of the Baltimore City Public School District, this is James Mosher's first year in the School-Family-Community Partnership Program. James Mosher Elementary School has always had active family and community involvement, but since joining Baltimore's School-Family-Community Partnership Program, it has improved and expanded its partnership activities. As co-chairs, the parent liaisons at James Mosher are essential members of the school's five-member Action Team for Family-School-Community Partnerships. In addition to the parent liaisons, who have children and grandchildren at the school, the Action Team comprises two teachers and the assistant principal. According to the co-chairs, the Action Team structure ensures that the responsibility for planning and implementing partnership activities is shared more equitably at the school. The co-chairs have also found that the support of the project facilitator, and monthly "cluster" meetings with other elementary and middle schools in the surrounding area, provide them with more resources to draw upon for ideas and support.

The school uses the framework of six types of involvement to plan its yearly activities. As a result, James Mosher has a number of family and community activities that make it a more pleasant, productive, and safer place for students. For example, the school has a Type 3 volunteer project called, "Pops on Patrol." This project consists of six grandfathers and grandmothers who patrol the school every morning and every afternoon.

The "Pops" have hats and vests so that they are easily identified. They attend regular planning meetings. They help to create a warm environment at the school and send a strong message to the students about the importance of schooling, safety, and punctuality. The children love the project. When one parent volunteer was out with pneumonia, the students frequently came to the office to find out what had happened to him and when he would be back. The program is evaluated by the school's Action Team. Representatives from the Action Team attend

Pops on Patrol meetings where the grandparents organize their activities and arrange for replacements when "Pops" are on vacation or ill. Among its other contributions to James Mosher, Pops on Patrol is credited for stopping delivery trucks from driving on the school playground.

According to the co-chairs of the school's Action Team, grandparents were chosen because they serve as important examples for some of the younger parents at the school. Grandparents also tend to have more free time. One co-chair of the Action Team states, "At James Mosher Elementary School, family includes grandparents, aunts, babysitters, grandmothers, sisters, uncles, stepfathers — we don't stop until we get someone who cares about the well-being of each child."

The Action Team at James Mosher has found that reaching all families of all students takes commitment and hard work. One effective strategy has been home visits. Both co-chairs conduct home visits at least twice a month. They find that their contacts in the community make these visits easier. Because the school has a long history in the community, the co-chairs find that there is always someone available to help them contact a "hard to reach" parent. According to one Action Team co-chair, "Even the younger guys that you see on the corner have gone through this building. When they see us coming, they say, 'They're coming from the school ya'll, quit your cursing and get out of the way.' I've yet to have a bad response from knocking on a door." The other co-chair adds that, in some instances, home visits are absolutely necessary to communicate with families about the school and their children. She provides the following story as illustration:

> Sometimes parents need more than a telephone call. For instance, a little boy in one of our special ed. [education] classes was having problems. We couldn't contact the mother by phone. So, I walked to his house just to get her to come over because he was having some problems. She just opened right up to us. She had just moved to the area. She knew that he was in special ed. and was having some behavior problems, but she really welcomed us and listened to what we had to say. She didn't have a phone, so a phone call wouldn't have done it for her. Now, she's a parent volunteer.

The Action Team at James Mosher has also coordinated special events to encourage young male parents to become more involved at the school, such as father-son breakfasts and Man-to-Man workshops. The latter event is for *all* males — grandfathers, fathers, uncles, and others. The school invites guest speakers from the community and provides home-cooked food. Issues related to school and community involvement are discussed during the workshop. The Action Team informs fathers about this and other events through the school's monthly newsletter, flyers, and, for special events, personal invitations.

The Action Team works hard to meet an important challenge of Type 1 Involvement (Parenting) getting information from workshops and other school meetings to all families who need and want it, not just to those who attend. James Mosher's Action Team makes sure that summary sheets of all school events are available in the school's Parent Room; summaries of all events also appear in the school's newsletter.

The school produces a two-way newsletter. It contains a tear-off on which parents can write comments or questions that the school replies to by phone or in the next newsletter. By incorporating the tear-off, the school is meeting a challenge of Type 2 Involvement (Communicating) establishing two-way channels of communication from home to school and from school to home. The newsletter also contains a monthly calendar of the lunch menu because parents expressed an interest in knowing what their children would have for lunch each day.

Although experiencing considerable success, James Mosher Elementary School has faced challenges in developing its partnership program. The co-chairs have found that working with people with different and sometimes conflicting personalities and attitudes has been one of the biggest challenges. However, both agree that if children remain the central focus of school-family-community partnerships, the conflicts and difficulties of adults can be overcome through open and respectful communication.

Langston Hughes Elementary School

The School. Langston Hughes serves about 370 students in grades pre-kindergarten through five. About 99% of these students are African American. In 1995, about 93% of the students received free or reduced-price lunches and about 13% received special education services. The mobility rate is high with about 18% entering and about 22% withdrawing from Langston Hughes during the 1994-95 school year. Interviews were conducted with the co-chairs of the school's Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships. One of the co-chairs is a second grade teacher and the other is the school's parent liaison. We met in the school's bright, cheerful Parent Room where the six "keys" to partnership based upon the framework of six types of involvement are prominently displayed.

The Story. Langston Hughes is located in the Baltimore City Public School District's northwest area. Before the school joined the Partnership program, the school's parent liaison was primarily responsible for family and community involvement. However, now the school's Action Team is responsible and the school has begun a comprehensive program, conducting practices under each of Epstein's six types of involvement.

When asked to describe one of the school's most successful practices of partnership thus far, the co-chairs of the Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships chose the "Living Museum." Children in grades pre-K through five "became" famous African Americans. They dressed in appropriate clothing and when a parent pushed a button, the students came to life to relate their contributions to the African American community and the larger society. For this activity, parents, teachers, and students worked together at the school on students' speeches and costumes. Parents and students also worked together at home and at school to create models of the inventions and other props that were used at the Living Museum. Teachers brought cooked dishes to share with special invited guests from the community and parents acted as hosts and hostesses for the event, showing community visitors around the school building.

The co-chairs of the Action Team attribute the Living Museum's success to three factors. First, the students were spotlighted. According to the parent liaison, "When their children participate... families come...." Second, there was a student incentive. Children were told that if fifty or more parents attended the Museum, they would be allowed to share a toy from home with their classmates during a school "show-and-tell" hour. Both co-chairs agree that children can be great motivators for families, saying respectively, "They are the ones who can really influence the parents," and "If they can get mom and dad to buy Nintendos, they can get them to come out to the school."

The co-chairs of the school's Action Team identified effective advertising as the third factor influencing the success of the Living Museum. The school had an article about the event in its monthly newsletter, and posted flyers about the event all around the community. In addition, the Action Team extended invitations to everyone visiting the school during the week prior to the event, and asked these individuals to tell others in the community. They found that it was important to get the information out in a timely fashion, to give families the opportunity to make arrangements for coming. They found that families will come out for Saturday events if they have enough time to plan for them. Their efforts paid off. Over 160 families and special guests from the police department and local businesses attended the event.

Langston Hughes uses sign-up sheets to evaluate what communications and incentives are most effective in getting families to attend school activities. At the end of each month, the parent liaison, who also co-chairs the Action Team, summarizes the school's events and the level of family-community participation. She has separate sign-in sheets for school activities, meetings, classroom volunteering, and office and cafeteria volunteering. She cross-checks these lists to ensure that no person is counted twice. She explains:

> I tally up the names of all the parents who have been involved that month, and if one person volunteered in both the office and the cafeteria, I only count that person once, not two or three times. So during a month, if I say that we had 129 families involved in school activities... I mean 129 *different* people.

Not only does Langston Hughes use the framework of six types of involvement, it also seeks to meet the challenges that accompany each type (Epstein, 1995). For example, one challenge of Type 3 Involvement (Volunteering) is to provide volunteer opportunities to *all* families, not just those who can come to the school. The co-leaders recognize that many of their "hard to reach" families are simply those who have very young children or responsibilities that do not allow them to become involved with their children's learning at the school. The school includes these parents by providing them the opportunity to assist teachers and the school *at home* through activities such as making classroom decorations, costumes, or food for school events. At-home volunteerism has been an effective way to involve parents in school activities who would not otherwise become involved.

Langston Hughes also meets the challenges of Type 1 Involvement (Parenting) and Type 2 Involvement (Communicating). The Action Team works hard to provide information shared at workshops and other school activities to *all* parents, not just those who can come to the school, and to promote two-way communication. The subcommittee for Type 2 involvement summarizes workshops and activities at the school in the school's monthly two-way newsletter. The school also has a telephone line that allows parents to communicate with someone at the

school with any questions they have concerning a workshop or activity that is summarized in the newsletter. The co-chairs of the Action Team believe that these communications contribute to their success in recruiting volunteers and achieving greater on- and off-campus family-community participation.

When asked about obstacles to implementing a strong partnership program, they agreed that their most difficult task was establishing partnerships with local businesses and community agencies. The area in which Langston Hughes is located has few businesses, and if the school goes outside of the area it risks taking another school's business partner. Consequently, Langston Hughes has had to be innovative in achieving success with Type 6 involvement. The school has developed strong partnerships with local churches and a local coalition of community and business agencies who use the school's facilities for community functions. Langston Hughes has found that by embracing the community and opening its doors until 9 p.m. every weeknight and each weekend, the school has been able to garner the financial, material, and human resources it needs to support and implement many of its school-family-community partnership initiatives. For example, the school now has an after-school tutoring program, an after-school computer class, and a newly formed basketball team.

The co-chairs of the Langston Hughes Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships state that since the Action Team started, *everyone* in the school feels more important and feels that his or her voice counts. According to the co-chairs, the Action Team's efforts have had positive results. They report that student attendance is higher, more parents are available to students while at school, and the climate of the building is calmer. In addition, they have observed that fewer students are late to school and students are better behaved because they do not want to miss any of the activities that the school offers. The co-chairs also say that parents are more informed about what the school is doing and what its needs are.

The parent liaison notes that her job is easier and the results are greater this year using the action team approach. She says that because plans and actions are more focused and because more people are working to achieve the same goals, more work is accomplished successfully than when she tried to do everything alone. She states:

> Everyone feels that they're involved in it, meaning everyone — the entire staff, the entire parent body, a lot of community representatives.... I don't need to say, "Well who can I turn to for this? Who can I turn to for that?" We're all turning to each other. We're all singing the same song and we know what is expected. We know that our agenda is to increase parent involvement, to make sure that we have community involvement which is very important, especially when you're talking about funding and getting resources, not just money, but resources — and that is very important....

It has made my job so much easier. Last year during my first year as parent liaison, I honestly thought that everyone in this building was against me. My mission was to help promote parent involvement, and I'd go to teachers and do surveys trying to find out what it is they want from parents. And, I wanted to know what parents want from teachers and I wondered, "How do I get them to connect?"... Then, this [the Baltimore School-Family-Community Partnership Program] fell into our lap.... It's excellent. It motivates you. It makes you see that you are not the only school facing these challenges. In fact, family and community involvement is so important that someone actually came up with a framework that we can use to make this a lot easier for us.

Cross Country Elementary School

The School. Cross Country Elementary School serves about 800 students in grades pre-kindergarten through five. More than 90% of these students are African American. In 1995, about 50% of these students received free or reduced-price lunches and about 8% received special education services. The mobility rate is comparatively low for Baltimore City Elementary Schools with about 5% entering and about 12% withdrawing from Cross Country Elementary School during the 1994-95 school year. Interviews were conducted with the principal, who is a member of the school's Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships and a community volunteer who chairs the Action Team. At Cross Country, the Action Team is a part of the School Improvement Team.

The Story. Cross Country is in the Baltimore City Public School District's northwest area. The school's Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships has primarily focussed on Type 2 Involvement (Communicating) during its first year because, in previous years, parents indicated their desire for more school-family communication. The Team produces a two-way, monthly newsletter that includes summaries of all workshops, a calendar of all school events, the cafeteria menu, and messages from the principal, the chair of the Action Team and the PTA. The school has a contest that is called the "One Hundred Percent Club" to encourage 100 percent of the children in each classroom to take the school newsletters home and to return the two-way tear-offs with their parents' signatures, questions, or comments to the classroom teachers. Classes with 100 percent returns win pizza parties, are announced over the intercom, and are recognized in the next newsletter.

The school's overall tear-off return rate is more than 70 percent, indicating that a majority of families regularly receive information about the school and have the opportunity to respond to the information they receive. The principal and chair of the Action Team state that the tear-off return campaign started slowly because it was hard to garner teacher support. However, with constant encouragement and reminders from the principal, all teachers have become involved and the One Hundred Percent Club is thriving.

In addition to parents, the Action Team sends the school newsletter to community agencies and local politicians. The newsletter goes out to legislators, the mayor, the school superintendent, and others so that the larger community is aware of the school's work and its partnership efforts and goals.

The school is also conducting activities under the other types of involvement. To encourage volunteerism at the school, Cross Country developed a Staff Volunteer Needs Form

on which teachers describe how volunteers can help them. The Action Team chair places the forms on the school's volunteer board so that when volunteers come in, there is always something for them to do. The volunteer takes down the form, goes to the teacher and says, "I am here to do so and so." The volunteer signs in and out on a classroom volunteer sheet and the Action Team chair collects each teacher's sheet at the end of the month.

The Action Team also provides opportunities for volunteers to provide services *for* the school at home or in the community. These volunteers are included in the school's semiannual volunteer appreciation brunch. At this brunch, volunteers are given certificates and small gifts that are provided by Cross Country's business partner (one of the school's practices for Type 6 Involvement — Collaborating with the Community). This community partner also provides trophies for the boys' basketball team, items needed for school fund-raising, and materials for the school's Parent Room.

The Action Team at Cross Country started the Parent Room as a practice for Type 1 Involvement (Parenting). The Parent Room is a place where families can go to find information on child development and other issues of interest. Parents are encouraged to bring materials that they would like to share with other families. Cross Country makes its Parent Room as friendly as possible because the school has an "open door" policy and wants families to know that they are welcomed and wanted. Once parents are at the school, the principal is likely to *persuasively* ask the family members for volunteer time.

According to the Action Team chair, the ideas generated by the framework of six types of involvement, the school's commitment to developing strong partnerships, and the staff's dedication to keeping students the central focus of all activities are key to building an effective program of school-family-community partnerships. The school principal adds that a shared vision is also necessary for the program's success and maintenance.

Response to the school's program of partnership has been positive. The principal notes:

> I have been here for 3 years, the first two as assistant principal and the last year as principal. The past two years, there have been many complaints that the school is not communicating, that the school is not communicating, over and over. I really got tired of it and I said to myself that no one is going to be able to say that they don't know what is going on in this school. So our Team sat down and talked about what should be in the newsletter, and we designed it this summer.... The parents love it. It has really improved communication between the school and the community.

Both the chair of the Action Team and the principal say that there are no "hard to reach" parents at Cross Country. According to the principal, "Even when someone steps through that door with a negative, when they leave, it's a positive. Before they leave the door they are part of

the family." Cross Country's definition of family does not stop at the mother or father. The school and the Action Team for School-Family-Community Partnerships look to guardians, grandparents, or whoever acts as "family" for the child. The principal and Action Team chair contend that since creating this atmosphere of "family" and trust at the school, the children are calmer, clearer about what is expected of them, and more excited about learning.

Conclusion

The visits to schools in Baltimore's School-Family-Community Partnership Program have yielded a number of key insights about how Action Teams using the framework of six types of involvement are helping their schools develop and maintain strong connections with their students' families and communities. These insights should be useful to other schools committed to establishing effective, comprehensive, and permanent programs of school-family-community partnerships.

1. School-family-community partnerships are a shared responsibility. All six schools show how Action Teams for School-Family-Community Partnerships, consisting of teachers, administrators, families, community members, and others, share responsibility for developing and implementing effective partnership practices.

2. The institutionalization of school-family-community partnerships takes time. Five of the schools featured in this report have been part of Baltimore's School-Family-Community Partnership Program for only one to two years. They have made good starts, but have much work to do before school-family-community partnerships are fully integrated in their school programs. However, Curtis Bay Elementary School, which has been developing its partnership program for four years, shows that with time and effort, the institutionalization of school-family-community partnerships can and does occur.

3. School-family-community partnerships reach out to all family members. James Mosher and Cross Country are examples of schools that have very broad definitions of "family" that include grandparents, aunts, uncles, babysitters, and other caring adults. These schools' definitions of family help them to make partnerships work for *all* their students.

4. School-family-community partnerships improve in incremental steps and with planning. To reach *all* families of *all* students at *all* grade levels, Action Teams for School-Family-Community Partnerships must engage in thoughtful planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement. This process is visible at Benjamin Franklin Middle School. Communications with all families for major events, such as Parents Night Out, require strategic planning. And when problems arise, such as situations created by untrained volunteers, new plans are needed to improve and maintain good partnership programs.

5. School-family-community partnerships are important throughout the grades. The schools featured illustrate the importance of families and communities to students' learning in elementary and middle schools. Elementary, middle, *and* high schools need good programs of partnership that include practices appropriate for their students and families.

6. School-family-community partnerships cannot be effective without a focus on students. Each school shows how central students are to strong, comprehensive programs of partnership between schools, families, and communities. Students are responsible for taking newsletters home and returning tear-offs to school. They encourage families to volunteer at and for the school, and they are the primary focus of communications, workshops, and other school events.

7. School-family-community partnerships *include* the community. Cross Country, James Mosher, Curtis Bay, and Langston Hughes are examples of elementary schools that have comprehensive partnership programs in all six areas of involvement, including connections with businesses and community agencies. Indeed, strong business partners and community connections can help schools develop and improve the other five types of involvement, and create a beneficial exchange of information and resources between schools, families, and communities.

8. School-family-community partnerships can help schools reach the "hard to reach." All six schools show that even the hardest to reach families, such as families with two working parents, or families without telephones, can be reached with the right strategies and practices.

9. School-family-community partnerships link to the curriculum and student learning. Whether through interactive homework, family learning survival kits, Living Museums, tutorial programs, GED programs, or other activities, each school featured shows how school-family-community connections can enhance students' learning and the ability of families and communities to assist in that learning.

10. School-family-community partnerships that are most effective meet the challenges of the six types of involvement. Each school that is featured in this report shows how important it is, when attempting to develop strong connections with *all* families and with community representatives and agencies, to not only conduct practices under each type of involvement but to meet the challenges for successful implementation that accompany each type of involvement.

In August of 1996, the southeast area of the Baltimore City Public School District joined the Partnership program, making it 79 schools strong. Schools that are members of Baltimore's School-Family-Community Partnership Program are also members of The National Network of Partnership-2000 Schools, which was begun in January, 1996 and is open to schools, districts, and states that are committed to developing comprehensive, permanent programs of school-family-community partnerships. One of the benefits of joining The National Network of

Partnership-2000 Schools is that members receive a free manual to guide, inform, and support their work (see, Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, & Simon, 1996). This manual is filled with information gleaned from years of working with Baltimore City schools. The work in Baltimore shows that, with the right ingredients and time, *every* school can develop programs of partnership that enable schools, families, and communities to better care for and educate today's youth.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol

1. When did your school become involved in the Partnership program? What is your role on your school's Action Team?

2. Describe two of your most successful or interesting partnership practices?

3. Why did you select these practices?

4. What were your goals for these practices?

5. What person(s) were key in making these practices successful?

6. What are the challenges that you faced in implementing these practices? Did any unexpected events or challenges arise? How did you deal with them?

    A. How did you get information to families not attending?

    B. How did you encourage the participation of hard to reach families?

    C. How did you make families who usually do not come feel welcomed?

7. Was there an evaluation built into your practices?

    If so, what methods did you use? What were the measurable results? Would you change your evaluation next time;if so, how?

    If not, what information would you have liked to gather to better evaluate the practice?

8. What have been the effects overall for your school?

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